



ENSURING AMERICA'S STRENGTH AND SECURITY:
A Democratic National Security Strategy for the 21st Century
(September 2005)

THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL SECURITY TO DEMOCRATS

- “The Democrats must, at long last, leave Vietnam behind and reclaim their credibility on foreign policy. And that means reclaiming their legacy, one of judicious American leadership of the global system they had such a major role in creating, and holding Bush’s feet to the fire to make sure that he repairs American credibility abroad.” [Michael Hirsh, Newsweek, 11/3/04]
- “National security played an important role in the outcome of the presidential contest. Despite continued military casualties in Iraq, many Americans went to the polls convinced that Bush will be stronger in defending the United States from terrorist attack, and that it would be risky to change the commander-in-chief in perilous times.” [Editorial, Philadelphia Inquirer, 11/4/05]
- “The media chose to focus on the [Democratic] party’s ‘values’ problem [in the 2004 election]. To be sure, that problem exists. But the focus on values misses the other important factor in this election: national security...Turning things around in the future doesn’t require better campaign tactics or a more charismatic candidate. It requires a change in the party’s strategic approach so that national security is no longer an afterthought handled by a small number of specialists...The election results were disappointing, but they provide an opportunity. My advice to Democrats is this: Take a deep breath, then start considering what you really believe about Iraq, terrorism, military and intelligence reform, and all the rest. Then start talking about it.” [Matthew Yglesias, The American Prospect, 12/04]
- “In the late 1940s the ADA [Americans for Democratic Action] saw the battle against Soviet totalitarianism and the battle against domestic injustice as morally intertwined. It used the Cold War to frame its calls for civil rights and civil liberties -- arguing that unless the United States respected human rights at home, communism would gain strength abroad. And it supported large funding increases for defense and foreign aid, insisting that it was the GOP, with its fidelity to tax cuts and a balanced budget, that would not aggressively wage the Cold War.

“These arguments are available to liberals again today. The Bush administration’s blind eye toward torture at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay has hurt U.S. efforts to convince the Muslim world that the war on terrorism is a war for human rights. The president’s massive tax cuts are draining government of the revenue it needs to adequately fund homeland security and the military. And President Bush’s democracy-promotion efforts in the Muslim world have been mostly talk.” [Peter Beinart, Washington Post, 12/9/04]

- “The Democratic Party must re-establish its national security bona fides among key constituencies if it hopes to win back the White House or Congress...”

“And so, Democrats have several lessons they must absorb from the failed 2000 and 2004 campaigns. First, Democrats need to learn to ‘talk the talk’ of military affairs. Too many candidates and top political operatives are uncomfortable using the language of the military...”

“Democrats fully agree with their Republican colleagues that the current threat to American peace and security--what might be called first-generation Al-Qaeda--needs to be totally destroyed using all the tools of American power. But they are equally concerned that we appear to have no long-term strategy to prevent the creation of the next generation of Al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups... Democrats need a more comprehensive and inspirational vision of their own to tackle this challenge.” [Kurt M. Campbell and Michael O’Hanlon, The National Interest, Summer 2005]